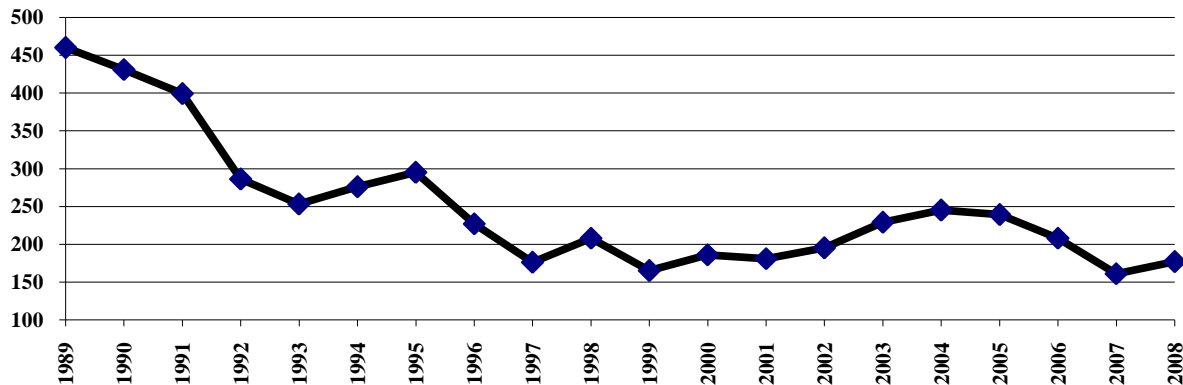


ROBBERY

Robbery is the taking or attempted taking of anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear. This crime includes muggings, purse snatchings, and bank hold-ups.

**Twenty Year Review:
Robbery in Cambridge, 1989-2008**



161 reported in 2007 • 177 reported in 2008

Over a four-year span from 2001 to 2004, robberies in the City slowly increased. This trend ended in 2005, and continued to decrease until 2007 at which point robberies reach a twenty year low. This downward trend ended in 2008 with a reported overall increase of 10%. A closer look at the breakdown of the types of robbery reveals a 12% decrease in commercial robberies and an 18% increase in street robberies.

	2007	2008	% Change
Commercial Robbery	41	36	-12%
Street Robbery	120	141	+18%
Total	161	177	+10%

Due to its violent nature, robbery is one of the most feared crimes. For this reason, robbery is one of the crimes most often considered by a citizen when he or she gauges the general “safety” of an area. Not only is robbery on the minds of local citizens but it is also one of the main concerns of business owners. Often, suspects approach their target, threatening to cause harm if the victim does not relinquish money or property. Weapons are brandished in some incidents, but a suspect may just rely on the victim’s perceived fear of harm. Most incidents involve little physical contact between the suspect and victim, and often result in no harm to the victim, especially when they comply with the suspect’s demands.

COMMERCIAL ROBBERY

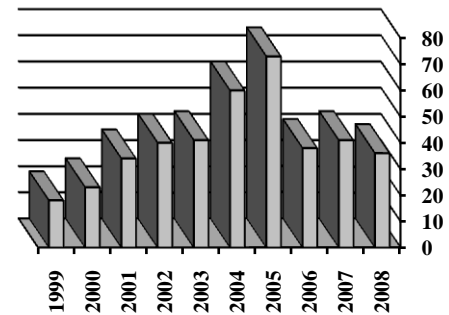
From 1970-1990, Cambridge averaged 100 commercial robberies annually. Throughout the 1990’s the number of robberies decreased dramatically to an average of 45 a year (with a high in 1990 of 102 and a low in 1999 of 18). From 2000 to 2005, the number of reported commercial robberies slowly increased, until 2006 when a decrease of nearly 50% was reported. Commercial robberies remained low in 2007 and continued to decrease throughout 2008.

Commercial robbery is described as the taking by force or threat of force anything of value from the care or custody of a commercial or financial establishment. Examples of this crime include a bank heist, a cab stick-up, and a convenience store hold-up. Commercial incidents tend to occur early in the morning or late into the night.

This year, commercial robberies experienced a decrease of 12%, with five fewer incidents occurring. Three business districts had the same number of robberies, with six each: Alewife/West Cambridge, Galleria/East Cambridge, and Inman Square. These three areas accounted for 50% of the commercial robberies that occurred in 2008.

Commercial Robbery 1999-2008

Banks were the most common target of commercial robberies in 2008, accounting for 15 of the incidents, or 42%. A number of Cambridge banks experienced more than one robbery. There were two unrelated robberies at the Cambridge Trust Bank on Huron Ave in Alewife, two unrelated at the Wainwright Bank on Mass Ave in Central Sq, and two unrelated at the Citizen's Bank on Cambridge St in East Cambridge. Twelve of the bank robberies took place in the first six months of the year. Eleven of the twelve resulted in an arrest, with three separate individuals responsible for seven of the robberies. The main time frame for bank robberies during 2008 was from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The beginning of 2008 saw multiple bank robbery patterns, with a number of suspects committing robberies throughout Cambridge and surrounding cities and towns.



COMMERCIAL ROBBERIES BY LOCATION TYPE			
Type	2006	2007	2008
Bank/Armored Car	9	9	15
Cab	1	0	4
Café	0	2	3
Convenience	12	8	9
Gas Station	5	4	1
Drug Store	0	0	0
Fast Food	1	2	0
Hotel/Motel	3	0	0
Jewelry Store	0	1	1
Liquor Store	0	2	0
Misc. Retail	7	12	3
Parking Garage/Lot	0	1	0

A quarter of the incidents, or nine robberies, in 2008 took place at convenience stores. All of these robberies except one took place on weekdays and six occurred between 8:30 p.m. and 3:30 a.m. The majority of the convenience store robberies (almost half) took place in Alewife/West Cambridge, all at different locations. One establishment in Inman Square was robbed twice, once in May and again in October. In two of the robberies no weapon was shown, in three a handgun was brandished, in one a knife was displayed, in another a baseball bat was shown, and in one the victim was unsure of the weapon used. During one week in December, three robberies occurred throughout the city at convenience stores, but it is unknown if they were related. However, in all instances the suspect was armed and had a mask or bandana covering his face.

Three of the four taxi cab robberies took place during the fourth quarter, two of which were related. The two related cab robberies were preceded by one in Lynn the night before, which also seemed to fit the series. The two Cambridge robberies took place in East Cambridge from 9:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. In all three incidents, a cab was dispatched to a location to pick up a fare where two suspects entered the cab, one in the front and one in the back. The rear passenger put a handgun to the driver while the suspect in the front stole cash, keys, and the radio so the driver could not call for help. Although no arrests were made in the Lynn or Cambridge cab robberies, the incidents that took place from November 1st through 3rd abruptly stopped.

The taxi cab incident that took place in Peabody in October resulted in one arrest. The arrested person pretended to be a fare directing the cab to where the other two suspects were waiting. As the cab sped away, one of the suspects shot at it.

Protect yourself and your business!! Please see the Protect Yourself section starting on page 151 for tips on how you can protect yourself against becoming a robbery victim, and how to handle the situation if you do find yourself in dangerous circumstances.

STREET ROBBERY

Street robberies historically take place during the evening hours, particularly after drinking establishments close, and in dark areas.

Street robbery involves all robberies committed against individuals, as opposed to commercial establishments. Despite the name, a "street" robbery does not necessarily have to occur on the street, although the majority of them do. Examples of street robberies are "muggings," "carjackings," and "purse snatchings." The number of street robberies reported in 2008 increased by 21 incidents, translating to an 18% increase over the previous year. This should be tempered by the fact that, in 2007, street robberies were at their lowest level in twenty years after dropping 30% from the previous year.

The number of street robberies across each neighborhood varied widely, which is a reflection of the residential and commercial mixture in each area. For example, Cambridgeport, Area 4, and East Cambridge are more densely populated than other neighborhoods and are closer to train stations and drinking establishments. These are factors that contribute to higher numbers of potential targets for street robbers. Individuals can become targets when they are walking alone late at night, distracted or intoxicated. The neighborhood that suffered from the highest number of robberies in 2008 was North Cambridge, accounting for 16%, or 22 of the total 141 incidents. East Cambridge and Area 4 experienced the second highest number of street robberies with 20 incidents each, accounting for a combined 28% of the total.

Of the 2008 incidents, 81% involved the use or threat of a weapon. The most commonly used weapons this year were hands and/or feet (52 incidents), knives (25 incidents), and handguns (18 incidents). While street robberies increased by 18%, only a few identifiable patterns developed throughout the year.

Four robberies took place on January 16 between 10:00 p.m. and 10:35 p.m. along the border of Cambridge and Somerville. These incidents involved a white or Hispanic male who approached his victims from behind and demanded money at knifepoint. No one was arrested in this robbery spree, but no similar incidents were reported in this area after that night.

Also of note is a trend of scattered juvenile-related street robberies that emerged around the Cambridge-side Galleria over the course of the first quarter. These robberies appeared to be unrelated except that they involved juvenile suspects and young victims. Two of these robberies resulted in arrests. In late February, three juvenile females were arrested after they robbed two juvenile victims of money and a T-Mobile Sidekick cell phone as they walked to the Mall. In a similar incident, a female victim was assaulted and robbed of her T-Mobile Sidekick cell phone by four juvenile female suspects (different suspects than the first incident) as she walked from the Lechmere MBTA station to the Mall in early March. These suspects were identified and taken into custody. It should be noted that the MBTA also experienced an increase in robberies involving Sidekick cell phones in 2008.

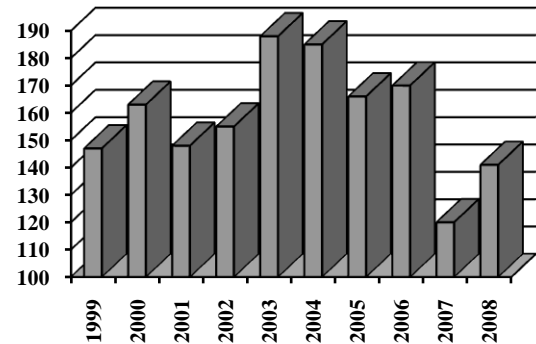
Between May 18th and June 25th, eight similar pack robberies took place in and around Area 4 (including incidents in Inman/Harrington, Cambridgeport, and Mid-Cambridge). All eight incidents in the pattern involved male victims in their 20s walking alone and two to six male suspects between the ages of 18 and 21. None of the suspects were armed; instead they resorted to pushing and “roughing up” the victims. The incidents occurred from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. This pattern came to a close when officers made an arrest of an Everett man for a robbery at Harvard & Pine St on June 25th.

In early July, there were two similar street robberies reported in the Danahy Park area. The incidents occurred around 8:00 p.m. and involved the unarmed thefts of a wallet and a purse. No arrests were made and no other similar incidents were reported in that area. In mid-September, there were two similar unarmed robberies in the area of Harvard Sq. A Lynn man was arrested after he was caught using credit cards that were stolen in one of the two robberies.

The last few months of the year saw the most significant patterns and fortunately resulted in a number of arrests. There was a robbery in early October in West Cambridge in which a woman was held at gunpoint and robbed of her cell phone and purse by three suspects. Two suspects were caught on camera in Lynn using the victim’s credit cards and were identified as two of four suspects who had recently been arrested in Boston for an armed robbery. The four Boston suspects admitted to two armed robberies in Cambridge. November and December saw a rise in street robberies as purse snatchings increased. The description in four of these robberies was very similar to two that took place in Somerville. The suspect, a heavy set white male in his late 30s, targeted women often implying that he had a weapon. In one of the Somerville robberies he stabbed the victim with a screwdriver before fleeing. Two suspects were arrested in these robberies, after the male suspect’s female accomplice was identified through surveillance photos using the victim’s stolen credit cards at local stores. Vincent Primo of Medford was found to be the alleged robber and Kim Szathmary of Somerville was alleged to be his accomplice. During this same time frame there were a number of robberies in the lower half of the city that involved two black male suspects who were robbing victims of money, jewelry, and cell phones. In mid-December, two suspects from Dorchester were arrested and two others were able to escape after an attempted robbery on Harvard St. In the three weeks prior to this arrest, there had been seven similar robberies with suspect descriptions like that of the arrested persons.

As stated earlier, street robberies can take place in many different places, including shopping malls, MBTA stations, and parking lots. Still, more than three-fourths of all street robberies in 2008 occurred on a street or sidewalk. Seven of the 141 robberies took place in a local park and four incidents took place at the Galleria Mall. Victims in 13 of the robbery cases knew the suspects, two incidents were between homeless individuals, and one was a drug deal gone wrong. Nearly 50% of the street robberies throughout the city occurred between 7:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m. This is a common timeframe for street robberies to occur because people are walking home after work or are out when the bars close.

Street Robbery 1999 - 2008



FIVE HISTORICAL STREET ROBBERY HOT SPOTS

1. **CENTRAL SQUARE**, specifically the area of Massachusetts Avenue between Washington and Franklin Streets, down Pearl Street. This is a prime location for homeless-on-homeless robberies. Mostly predatory, but also purse snatchings concentrated here in the late afternoon and late evening.
2. **CAMBRIDGESIDE GALLERIA**, including the Lechmere MBTA Station area. These usually involve juveniles robbing each other between 3:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
3. **HARVARD SQUARE**, around Church Street, Brattle Street and Harvard Yard. Predatory robberies in the late evening mixed with early evening pack robberies.
4. **RUSSELL FIELD AND THE ALEWIFE MBTA STATION**. The 300-400 blocks of Rindge Avenue hold the major concentration for these incidents. Pack robberies target people leaving the station and “bullyboy” robberies target schoolmates crossing through the field.
5. **UPPER CAMBRIDGEPORT**, the area surrounded by Franklin and Erie Streets, between Brookline and Pleasant Streets. These incidents are predatory in nature and concentrated during the late night and predawn hours of the weekend.

Our Crime Analysis Unit breaks down street robbery incidents into categorizations of similar types for further and more accurate analysis. Approximately 45% of the street robberies were “predatory,” where the victim was approached by one or two suspects, threatened, and robbed. The second most common type of street robberies were pack robberies involving three or more suspects, which accounted for 29% of the total. Purse snatchings and robberies by acquaintances each represented 9% of the total.

Frequently Occurring Scenarios in Cambridge

A long-term trend analysis of street robberies in Cambridge reveals a number of frequently recurring scenarios. The number in parenthesis after the category indicates how frequently that categorization occurred in Cambridge this past year:

Acquaintance Robberies (13): Related to domestic robbery and homeless robbery (read below), Acquaintance Robberies are committed by someone the victim knows. Common scenarios include drinking buddies robbing each other after a night at the bar, friends turning on each other, and robberies between co-workers.

ATM Robberies (0): In this type of robbery, the suspect may approach the victim immediately after the victim withdraws money from an ATM and demand that he or she hand over the cash, or the suspect may wait behind the victim as they make a transaction, then take the money directly from the ATM and run. An ATM robbery can also occur when suspects approach a victim on the street, threaten the victim by displaying or implying a weapon, and demand the victim go to an ATM and withdraw money for them.

Bikejackers (0): Juvenile robberies of intimidation where the primary property targets are bicycles.

Bully Boys (2): Juvenile robberies of intimidation. In most occurrences, the victim knows the perpetrators. Committed by and against school-aged youths, they occur on the way home from school, or at playgrounds, malls, parks, or skating rinks. These robberies usually involve two to four juveniles strong-arming their victim, stealing such things as his cell phone, MP3 player, or lunch money.

Carjacking (2): In this scenario, a predator approaches a victim entering or exiting his or her car, or when stopped at a traffic light. The robber orders the victim out of the vehicle and demands the keys.

STREET ROBBERIES BY NEIGHBORHOOD			
AREA	2006	2007	2008
North Cambridge	18	11	22
East Cambridge	20	15	20
Area 4	36	21	20
Cambridgeport	19	19	16
Peabody	13	7	13
West Cambridge	4	6	13
Mid-Cambridge	12	10	12
Inman/Harrington	23	12	10
Riverside	10	11	9
M.I.T. Area	1	2	4
Agassiz	3	4	1
Cambridge Highlands	5	2	1
Strawberry Hill	6	0	0
Total	170	120	141

Dial-A-Victim (1): These robberies target delivery service personnel. In these situations, suspects usually brandish a knife or gun to intercept a delivery person.

Domestic (2): This type of scenario occurs when someone close to the victim, like a family member, romantic partner, or roommate, takes money or property from them by the use or threat of violence.

Drug Deal (1): Typically drug deals gone awry.

Home Invasion (1): One of the most serious robbery types. Home invasions involve robbers entering their victim's homes, subduing the residents, and robbing the home. Fortunately this type of robbery is rare in Cambridge, and when it occurs, the victim generally knows the perpetrator.

Homeless Robberies (2): These are incidents of homeless people robbing each other. The majority of these robberies occur in the vicinity of Central and Harvard Squares, or at various shelters. The victim is usually acquainted with the perpetrator, and in many cases, both are intoxicated. Property stolen ranges from a bottle of wine to a blanket or a pair of shoes.

Pack Robberies (41): In this situation, a group of three or more individuals will target victims around shopping malls, MBTA stations, streets, or recreational areas. The robberies are not always premeditated and the typical victim is often a male between the ages of 15-25, walking alone.

Predatory Robberies (63): This type of street robbery has the most pronounced effect on a citizen's perception of safety. Predatory robberies are synonymous with "muggings." In the typical scenario, one or two men approach the victim with knife or gun and demand cash. Cambridge typically experiences more two-person predatory robberies than any other type.

Purse Snatch (13): The purse-snatcher is generally unarmed, and has little intent to cause injury. After "casing" a victim—usually a female carrying a purse, bag, or wallet—this robber approaches quickly—on foot or on a bicycle—and snatches the item out of the victim's hands or off her shoulder before she has a chance to react, often effecting a "body check" in the process. Some incidents also involve the snatching of purses from the ground at outdoor cafes where accessibility is easy.

Robberies in 2008

